

**Records & Archives Management Committee**  
**Minutes, Friday, 8 March 2002, 2:30 PM**  
**J. V. Fletcher Library**

Members Present: Ellen Harde, Jane Hinckley, Ginny Moore, Bob Oliphant, Kaari Tari

This was the first meeting of this newly appointed Town committee. Town Clerk Kaari Tari swore in those members present.

*Historical Records Survey*

We reviewed the “Historical Records Survey of Westford, Massachusetts” performed in July 2000 by Nancy V. Kougeas under a grant from the Massachusetts’ Documentary Heritage Grant program. It identifies both public and private Town records and highlights problems in the storage of many of these records. Kaari will make sure that the heads of all the Town offices and boards cited in the survey have a copy of the survey, and she will invite them to our meeting scheduled for April 5.

*Records Management Policy*

Westford does not have a Records Management Policy. This is something we should address soon. The Town of Burlington Municipal Archives web site has posted their Records Management Policy. It may be a good model for us. Kaari will send us the URL for this web site. <<http://208.58.133.9/clerk/archives/index.htm>>.

*Records Storage Sites*

One of our greatest needs is for additional, safe storage space. We discussed several possibilities of town-owned property for use as storage:

- Additional space at Town Hall – there are file cabinets in the basement that can be used for some records. The Historical Commission moved some records to these cabinets. However, the basement is not a good environment for storing such records, and the records are not in a secured place. There are also records in the attic that need to be archived and stored properly. There may be room in the Assessor’s safe (which abuts the Town Clerk’s safe) for safe storage of additional records.
- J. V. Fletcher Library (JVFL) – Ginny said there are two 7x4x1-foot glass-faced bookcases and one 4-drawer file cabinet in the Atwood Room that could be used for storage of town records, and there is space for more cabinets, if the town would buy them.
- Westford Museum & Museum Cottage – may have space for some town records; check with Marilyn Day.
- Old fire stations at Graniteville and Forge Village – check with Selectmen.
- Old water department buildings – check with Selectmen.
- Northern Bank & Trust Co., 45 Main St. – we should write a letter to James Mawn (sp?) expressing our interest in the building, should the bank ever move. Ellen has his address.

- Millenium School Pods – these are owned by the town and should be available when the new schools open. We would have to find a suitable place for them.

Kaari will write a letter to the Board of Selectmen telling them of our interest in finding another Town-owned building for use in storing Town records. She will also contact the Land Use Priorities Committee to make them aware of our interest in such a building.

Nancy Kougeas in her records survey raised the issue of whether it was legal to store Town records at sites other than the Town Hall. We should see if there is a legal issue regarding the off-site storage of Town records.

### *Cost of Preservation Copying and Storage of Records*

We discussed having additional records microfilmed. About 20 years ago the Mormon Church microfilmed town vital records to about 1905 and the minutes of the Selectmen's Meetings. These are available in the Town Clerk's Office and at the JVFL. Ginny knows of several companies that provide microfilming services. She will contact them for prices. Ginny thought that it cost about 90¢ per page for microfilming and about 75¢ per page for archival photocopying.

The Burlington Town Clerk told Kaari that an archival vault installation costs about \$60,000.

Bob will find out what Westford records are available through the Mormon Church's Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT.

### *Funds*

The Town Clerk's budget has \$3,000 for record preservation and \$4,000 for microfilming. Kaari has put a placeholder in her 5-year plan for a new safe record storage facility.

The Assessors Office stores some of their records in bank safe deposit boxes. This is an expense that could be eliminated if the Town had a safe storage place for its records. Kaari will see what their budget is for this.

We should look for possible grants for supporting records preservation and archiving. Bob distributed Technical Leaflet #1 on the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board (MHRAB) on "How to Find Funding in Massachusetts".

We should also publicize our activities so that townspersons who might want to make a memorial contribution to the town know of this need.

The Theodore Edson Parker Foundation in Lowell funds such preservation activities, but they may limit their funds to the City of Lowell.

The Harpley Foundation in Westford may contribute funds. The contact is Barbara St. Onge in Carlisle.

We should consider using interns to help archive records during the summer. Burlington made ample use of inexpensive summer interns from Simmons College.

#### *Others Interested in Preserving Town Records*

We should involve others who might be interested in supporting the charter of this new Town committee. Names of some persons to invite to the April 5 meeting include: heads of various town offices and boards, June Kennedy, David Christiana, Mike Perron, Mary Jane Plaisted, Marilyn Day, Dick Kenyon, Rita Miller, Doris Karkota.

#### *Officers*

Ginny Moore agreed to serve as chair of the Records & Archives Management Committee.

#### *Next Meetings*

We will meet at the JVFL at 10:00 AM on Friday, March 22, and drive to Burlington to see their new Archives center. Kaari will make arrangements for this with the Burlington Town Clerk.

We will meet at the JVFL at 2:30 PM on Friday, April 5.